

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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O 151530Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1712

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1398

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, ET, SU, US

SUBJECT: SUDANESE CONCERN RE EPMG INTENTIONS IN ERITREA

BEGIN SUMMARY. FONMIN SUMMONED AMBASSADOR MAY 15 TO EXPRESS DEEP GOS CONCERN AT PROSPECTIVE ETHIOPIAN ARMED CIVILIAN MARCH INTO ERITREA. GOS CONSIDERS THIS CAN ONLY HAVE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES BOTH FOR REGION AND INSIDE ETHIOPIA ITSELF. SUDANESE ACCORDINGLY WISHED CALL USG ATTENTION TO MATTER AS ONE OF FIVE PERMANENT MEMBERS, SECURITY COUNCIL, AND IS SIMILARLY APPROACHING OTHER FOUR. AMBASSADOR NOTED DEPT PRESS SPOKESMAN'S REAFFIRMATION THAT WE FAVOR SOLUTION THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS

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TO WHICH FONMIN REACTED POSITIVELY. END SUMMARY.

1. FONMIN MAKKAWI SUMMONED ME APRIL 15 TO DISCUSS ETHIOPIAN SITUATION. FONOFF USEC MIRGHANI WAS PRESENT. READING FROM PREPARED BRIEF, MAKKAWI STATED GOS HAS LEARNED FROM PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES THAT EPMG INTENDS TO LAUNCH AN ARMED CIVILIAN MARCH INTO ERITREA SUPPORTED BY REGULAR ETHIOPIAN FORCES. CITING INDICATIONS OF THIS DEVELOPMENT (ALREADY REPORTED BY EMBASSY ADDIS), MAKKAWI STATED PURPOSE MARCHERS WOULD BE TO ENTER PROVINCE, KILL ANY
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ERITREANS WHO GOT IN THE WAY, TAKE OVER PROPERTY AND FARMS

AND SETTLE DOWN IN LARGE NUMBERS. MARCHERS HAVE BEEN TOLD THIS IS "CRUSADE" AGAINST MOSLEMS. REGULAR FORCES HAVE MODERN ARMS AND MODERN PLIES WHICH THEY RECEIVE FROM BOTH EAST AND WEST (MAKKAWI SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED YUGOSLAVIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND CHINA, AS WELL AS OURSELVES).

2. FONMIN STRESSED FOREGOING SITUATION IS CAUSING CONCERN TO GOS BECAUSE OF ITS LIKELY IMPACT ON THE ERITREAN PEOPLE, THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE, AND ETHIOPIA AS A NEIGHBOR COUNTRY TO SUDAN. MAKKAWI EMPHASIZED THIS WAS NEITHER THE CORRECT NOR THE SUITABLE WAY TO SOLVE THE ERITREAN PROBLEM. RECALLING LONG-PENDING GOS OFFER OF GOOD OFFICES, HE SAID THAT BOTH SIDES HAD AGREED BUT EPMG HAD PREFERRED TRY MILITARY SOLUTION AND, WHEN LATTER HAD FAILED, WAS NOW RESORTING TO THIS MARCH. THIS ACTION WOULD BE LIKELY TO HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES IN SUDANESE FRONTIER AREA. UNARMED ERITREAN CIVILIANS COULD BE EXPECTED ENTER SUDAN IN LARGE NUMBERS TO SAVE THEIR LIVES, AS WELL AS ARMED ERITREAN GUERRILLAS. THIS ACTION COULD CAUSE EPMG AGAIN TO VIOLATE SUDANESE AIRSPACE. CHOOSING HIS WORDS CAREFULLY, FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD "LEAD US TO DEFEND OUR BORDERS" AND THIS, IN TURN, COULD LEAD TO SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES IN THE REGION.

3. FONMIN CONCLUDED THAT GOS BELIEVES THAT EPMG CONSIDERS THAT MARCH CAN OCCUR WITHOUT SUCH SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES, AS FOREGOING BUT "WE THINK THEY ARE WRONG". CONSEQUENCES WOULD IN FACT BE GRAVE IN REGION AND EVEN INSIDE ETHIOPIA ITSELF. FOR THAT REASON GOS WANTED TO BRING THIS MATTER TO USG ATTENTION AS ONE OF THE FIVE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (IN RESPONSE QUESTION, HE SAID THAT SUDAN ALSO APPROACHING OTHER FOUR BUT WAS NOT REPEAT NOT RAISING MATTER WITH ETHIOPIANS).

4. I REPLIED THAT USG WAS FOLLOWING SITUATION CLOSELY. ONLY YESTERDAY DEPT PRESS SPOKESMAN HAD RE-EMPHASIZED OUR VIEW THAT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES CONCERNED ARE THE WAY TO RESOLVE THE ERITREAN PROBLEM. MAKKAWI AND MIRGHANI BOTH AGREED THIS WAS RIGHT LINE TO TAKE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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SAID THEY HOPED LATEST COMMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN WOULD BECOME KNOWN TO ERITREANS. REPLIED I ASSUMED IT WOULD BUT NOTED THEY WERE FREE TO MAKE WHATEVER USE THEY WISHED OF DEPARTMENT'S STATMENT (I SUBSEQUENTLY FURNISHED MIRGHANI IN WRITING WITH DEPARTMENT'S ANSWER TO FIRST QUESTION IN PARA 3 STATE 119336). MAKKAWI COMMENTED THAT GOS HAS INFORMATION THAT PEOPLE TRAINING THE MARCHERS ARE "ISRAELIS WITH AMERICAN PASSPORTS". I CALLED HIS ATTENTION TO

WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ENTITLED "US WEIGHS URGING ETHIOPIA AGAINST WAR". (USINFO 141740Z MAY 76), STRESSING THAT THIS WAS NOT AN OFFICIAL REPORT TO THE EMBASSY BUT THAT IT CERTAINLY DID INDICATE USG CONCERN.

5. COMMENT. TIMELY RECEIPT STATE 119336 AND USINFO 141740Z MAY 76 MOST USEFUL INCLUDING SUDANESE PRE-LIMINARY INDICATION OF OUR CONCERN AT RECENT ETHIOPIAN DEVELOPMENTS. DEPTH OF GOS WORRY AT POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES IS INDICATED BY FACT THAT NIMEIRI HAD ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED MEETING SEE ME HIMSELF ON THIS SUBJECT AND APPOINTMENT WAS ONLY TRANSFERRED TO FONMIN AT LAST MINUTE. SUDANESE REACTED PUBLICLY AND SHARPLY TO ETHIOPIAN VIOLATIONS OF SUDANESE AIRSPACE LAST FEBRUARY AND COULD THUS HARDLY TURN BLIND EYE TO ANY SIMILAR INCURSIONS IN FUTURE. GOS HOPES THIS CAN BE AVOIDED BUT IS OBVIOUSLY FEARFUL THAT EVENTS HKY GET OUT OF HAND. WOULD THEREFORE APPRECIATE INSTRUCTIONS WHICH CAN BE USED IN RESPONSE TO FONMIN'S APPROACH IN ORDER TO MAKE EXTENT OF OUR CONCERN OFFICIALLY CLEAR HERE.
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